



TEXT MESSAGE

WestHills Church / February 5, 2012

This Week's How To: Grow

(Each week we highlight a specific biblical thought that helps us accomplish our God-given mission and vision--we call them "How Tos".)

Prayer – I grow as I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life. (Psalm 66:16-20)

In 2002 the Christian Praise Band "Mercy Me" released a CD titled *Spoken For*. In that CD was a song "Word of God Speak". The song's powerful opening verse says: *"I'm finding myself at a loss for words- And the funny thing is it's OK- The last thing I need is to be heard- But to hear what you would say"*.

During struggles we might spend hours on our knees talking, praying out loud to God, sharing prayer requests to others, etc. Perhaps what we need from time to time is to be still and quiet in prayer and just listen? I do not know the right words at times but...God does! I don't know what to tell a grieving friend always but...God does! The chorus to this awesome song is a cry out: *"Oh word of god speak- Would you pour down like rain- Washing my eyes to see- Your majesty- To be still and know- That you're in this place- Please let me stay and rest- In your holiness- Word of God speak"* (Mercy Me, M2 Communications, 2002)

Prayer is the glue that keeps us together with God and one another. Acts 2:42 tells how the early church "...devoted themselves to the Apostles teachings and to fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer". When we live in Biblical Community often times all we have to offer is prayer for a Home Group member. That's ok, go ahead and pray. Add scripture to your prayers and quiet time. Psalm 100 can always start your session. It is a short passage but can place you in the right mindset to hear from God...check it out!

Let me close with a prayer request: Pray for the Text Message writing team and that God will continue to use us to bring relevant, accurate and challenging bible study to the WestHills Family, thank you!

Discussion: Jim and Betty have been coming to your Home Group for several months and are members of WestHills. Tonight you plan to ask Jim to say the closing prayer at the end of the Home Group prayer time. You approach Jim in the kitchen to give him a heads up. He tells you he does not want to do that and that he is not comfortable praying out loud. You think to yourself, we are around Christian friends that he knows. Do you say something to Jim? How would you approach him to discuss your thoughts?

Fortune Cookies: Danger of Pride

Proverbs 3



Day 1: ENCOUNTER God's word to put yourself in touch with Him.

¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, ² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. ³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. ⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. ⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. ¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. ¹³ Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, ¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver and

yields better returns than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. ¹⁹ By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; ²⁰ by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew. ²¹ My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; ²² they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. ²³ Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; ²⁴ when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. ²⁵ Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, ²⁶ for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared. ²⁷ Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. ²⁸ Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"— when you now have it with you. ²⁹ Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. ³⁰ Do not accuse a man for no reason— when he has done you no harm. ³¹ Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, ³² for the LORD detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his confidence. ³³ The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. ³⁴ He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. ³⁵ The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame.

► **Circle the word wisdom or wise throughout this passage.**

Day 2: EXPLORE the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

1. Proverbs 3 speaks of the benefits of wisdom. In vs. 2 Solomon states that prolonged life is a byproduct of these ideas. What do you think he means by this?
2. We all want to win favor in God's sight. What must we do (vs. 3)? Explain in your own words what vs. 3 is saying?
3. You and I might know many people with PhD's and MBA's. How can they relate to the idea of verse 5? Give an example of how you have fallen in this way.
4. What other words does this passage use to describe wisdom? (example in v.1: "my teaching")
5. Verse 9 mentions first fruits. What is that in this context? Is that before or after taxes?
6. Are you searching for wisdom? How do you do that?
7. We should all pray for discernment. What is discernment?
8. What is an example of verse 27 in your world?
9. Proverbs 3 ends with three "good vs. bad" comparisons. What are they?
10. Discussion: How can Proverb 3 relate to a 16 yr old? 40 yr old? 65 yr old?

Day 3: EXAMINE an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Main Idea of the Passage: Thinking highly of one's own wisdom is destructive.

Proverbs: A new way of writing, in which divine wisdom is taught us by Proverbs, or short sentences, which contain their whole design within themselves and are not connected with one another. We have had divine *laws*, *histories*, and *songs*, and how divine *proverbs*; such various methods has Infinite Wisdom used for our instruction, that, no stone being left unturned to do us good, we may be inexcusable if we perish in our folly. Teaching by proverbs was, 1. An ancient way of teaching. It was the most ancient way among the Greeks; each of the seven wise men of Greece had someone saying

